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Above: The Rev. JoAnn Watson, right, and Keith Williams, left, attend a Feb. 24, 2023, press conference announcing Detroit's new reparations task force at West Side Unity Church. *Credit: Malachi Barrett, BridgeDetroit*

Below: Keith Williams is co-chair of the Detroit Reparations Task Force. He's urging Detroiters to allow the group more time to continue with its work. *Credit: Malachi Barrett, BridgeDetroit*



Reparations: A movement made in Detroit



By Malachi Barrett

The fight for reparations is as old as America itself, but the modern movement owes much to Detroiters.

"Reparations Ray" Jenkins, an impeccably dressed real estate agent who came to Detroit from Memphis, spent his life doggedly campaigning for federal payments to descendants of slaves. He helped convince former Congressman John Conyers Jr., a lion of the civil rights movement, to introduce legislation calling for a federal reparations commission. While efforts in Congress stalled, Rev. Dr. JoAnn Watson's voice of conscience made the case in city hall and on the airwaves.

Jenkins, Conyers and Watson have since died, leaving their unfinished work to heirs of the reparations movement. Though many thought it a lost cause, the possibility of reparations is stronger than ever. Last year, Detroit joined a wave of cities establishing local reparations commissions to take responsibility for harms inflicted against Black residents.

"A lot of advocates and those who attend the meetings carry on the legacy of those before us," said Council President Mary Sheffield, who helped establish the task force. "We are building on that work (of) pioneers and legends in the reparations movement."

Detroit's contribution to the movement is important history to consider, said Trevor Smith, a New Yorker who builds partnerships around reparations initiatives as co-founder and executive director of Black Liberation Indigenous Sovereignty Collective. Smith said the work requires growing cultural awareness around the story of people who have been fighting for reparations since the country's founding.

"There's a lineage of this movement," Smith said. "The call for reparations has long been part of the Black radical tradition and the broader movement for Black lives. This idea that too much time has passed (since slavery), folks like Reparations Ray play an important role. There were folks calling for it, you were ignoring them. That is not the fault of the Black community."



Enslaved African Americans lived in Detroit since its founding, brought by French and British settlers. The 1778 Census recorded 138 enslaved people, which increased to 300 by the time slavery was outlawed in the Michigan Territory.

The city's first mayor John R. Williams and many prominent residents of early Detroit were slave owners. Their family names are memorialized in street names and other dedications, including Beaubien, Brush, Cadillac, Campau, Cass, Dequindre, Hamtramck, Livernois, Macomb, McDougall and others. Watson argued for stripping their names from public spaces among other reparations policies.

Many Black residents have family roots in southern states, but slave labor also built Detroit. Jenkins, who moved to Detroit from Memphis, was a descendant of enslaved people. As a child, Jenkins earned a quarter each day for bringing water to Black sharecroppers.

Jenkins founded Slave Labor Annuity Pay (SLAP) in 1963, often described in news reports as a one-man organization. His

argument was straightforward. Jenkins said reparations are an inheritance owed to the descendants of Black slaves who built America for free.

Janis Hazel, a member of Detroit's reparations task force, met Jenkins in the 1980s. She remembers stories Jenkins told about his grandfather, a former slave and sharecropper who died at the age of 103 without anything to pass on to his family.

"Reparations was very personal to (Jenkins), his grandfather had been working for 99 years and had nothing to leave his grandchildren," Hazel said. "He never had a foundation to start with. The problem is never having time to catch up. You're just always working."

Jenkins pounded the pavement, handed out leaflets, shouted speeches, debated on television, wrote letters to prominent Black figures and once slipped past the Secret Service to deliver his message to President Bill Clinton.

A few years after Jenkins founded SLAP, another proposal for reparations was unveiled in Detroit in dramatic fashion. The 1969 National Black Economic Development Conference was the stage for James Forman to present the "Black Manifesto."

"For centuries we have been forced to live as colonized people inside the United States, victimized by the most vicious, racist system in the world," reads an opening portion of the manifesto. "We have helped to build the most industrial country in the world."

Jenkins sought \$1 million for each Black American and a \$40 billion scholarship fund. Delegates at the conference demanded \$500 million in reparations from white churches and synagogues for their role in perpetuating slavery. The call triggered some donations but was largely rejected by religious organizations.

Demands for reparations became harder to ignore after Congress authorized payments to Japanese Americans interned during World War II. The federal government issued a formal apology in 1988 and distributed \$1.6 billion in restitution to roughly 82,000 Japanese Americans. It established a precedent for Black and Indigenous Americans to seek compensation.

Jenkins found an ally in Conyers, the country's longest-serving African American congressman. In 1989, Conyers introduced a bill seeking to convene a commission of the brightest minds to investigate the impact of slavery. Only Congress, he argued, could correct the injustice.

Hazel was working for Conyers at the time and recently found a press release she wrote announcing the bill's introduction back in 1989.

Thirty-five years ago, Conyers said the time was ripe to discuss reparations. He compared the reparations movement to a seed left inside a closet that grew into a tree and burst through the door.

Jenkins sometimes waged a lonely campaign – news reports say he even endured public ridicule – but lived to see a wave of national admiration for his efforts. He was honored with a secondary street sign in the former Paradise Valley business district downtown.

He inspired activists like Watson, a long-time Detroit City Council member who served on the Detroit reparations task force until her death last year. Jenkins was a frequent caller on Watson's radio show "Wake up Detroit," and she was reportedly first to dub him "Reparations Ray."

Watson also worked alongside Conyers, who hired her as a public policy director. She served as chair of the local chapter of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA).

Watson shepherded an ordinance through the City Council requiring companies seeking to do business with a city to disclose whether they engaged in or profited from slavery. It passed in 2004 and was updated in 2019 with disclosure requirements for contractors that profit from prison labor.

Sheffield said Watson was an easy choice when she was assembling the task force's executive committee. Watson died last summer just as the group was getting started.



"JoAnn Watson was unapologetically pro-reparations, pro-African American, pro-justice and equality," Sheffield said. "She made you feel comfortable talking about our history, what is owed to us. All we can do is honor her in the work we do."

Watson's leadership with N'COBRA kept Detroit connected to national conversations about reparations. Jenkins helped organize the Detroit chapter's first reparations awareness day event, which continues each year at the Shrine of the Black Madonna church on Detroit's west side.

This year's program was organized by N'COBRA Co-Chair Anita Belle, a former task force member and Reparations Labor Union founder. She opened by honoring leaders of the social justice movement under the iconic painting "Black Madonna with Child," which was unveiled on Easter Sunday in 1967.



The 18-foot-tall painting was created by Detroit native Glanton Dowdell, who learned to paint in prison and later helped form a local Black Panther Party chapter. Dowdell was reportedly arrested during the 1967 uprising, when Gov. George Romney instituted a curfew, and beaten by an officer who recognized him – a possible sign of the painting’s narrative power.

Detroit had a major influence on the post-WWII Black nationalist movement, which sought to empower Black people facing oppressive systems like police brutality. Rev. Albert Cleage, Jr. organized for Black ownership of business and government institutions from the Shrine of the Black Madonna. Cleag notably demanded white businesses and political leaders to support Black-owned co-ops through a “transfer of power.”

The reparations task force also has living legends like Detroit educator, poet and activist Gloria House. She has been involved in numerous social justice movements dating back to her work with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. House organized voter registration drives in Alabama, protested Detroit water shutoffs and backed anti-war and anti-police brutality causes.

Detroit’s contributions to the reparations movement were memorialized in a documentary commissioned by the city’s task force and produced by Watson’s godson Khary Frazier.

He said resurfacing the history reinforced an understanding that reparations work relies on dedicated people driven by a higher purpose.

“A lot of questions come forward when we’re talking about empowering the grassroots community for Black people in America,” Frazier said. “What should be done and is it ever enough? It’s going to take commitment.”

And while reparations may be a popular cause today, it’s only because of these past leaders that it’s even come this far.

Task Force Co-Chair Cidney Calloway is in her early 30s, the youngest member of the group. She said it’s been inspiring to learn more about Jenkins, Conyers, Watson. “Now is the time” to follow through on their efforts, Calloway said.

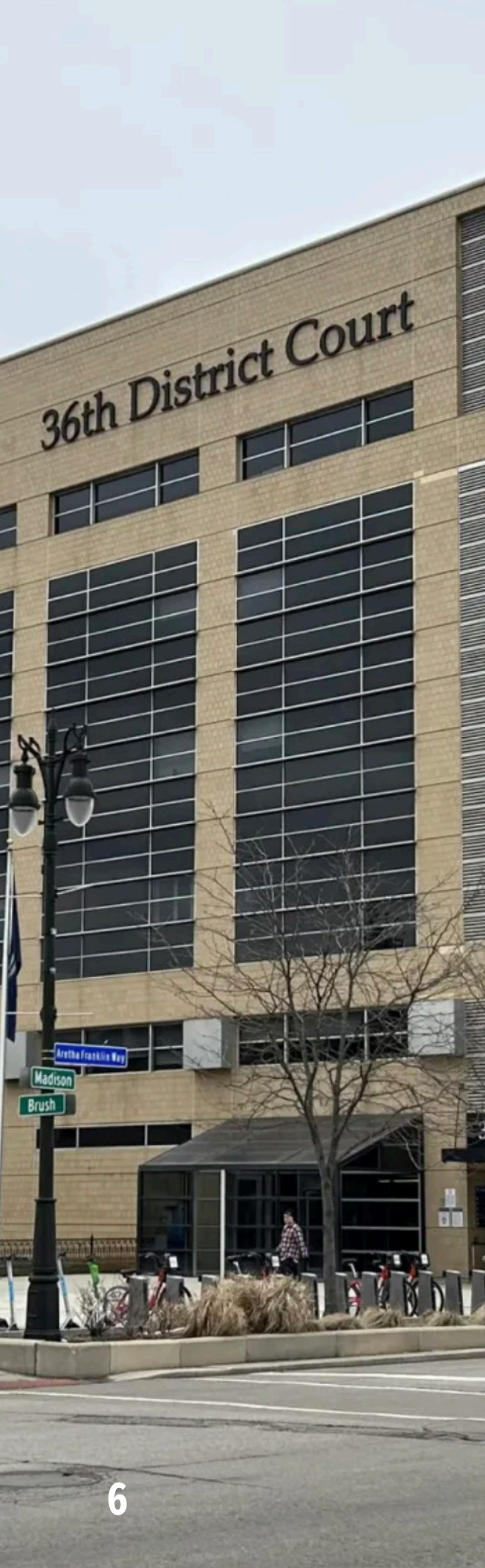
“Millennials are excited about moving forward with this idea and making sure that they understand that this is an actual possibility,” Calloway said. “I’m sure when my elders were coming out, they’re like ‘we’re gonna try,’ they’ve been trying for so long because the climate for it has never been better.

“The reparations history is here. People are looking to those pioneers, but now it’s an opportunity for us to bring it into the new Millenia.” 🇺🇸

Photos by Malachi Barrett



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Detroit Police have arrested your loved one. Here's what to do next.



By Tatiana Walk-Morris

For Detroiters, helping a loved one who has been arrested can be a confusing and complex process.

Finding information about why they've been arrested, the offenses they've been charged with and who will represent them in court can involve contacting multiple departments.

Why are they being detained? When will they be released? How much will it cost to bail them out?

Here are some resources on what to know and where to start:

Locating your loved one

The first step when someone is incarcerated is to figure out where they are being held. In Detroit, that can depend on the age of the person. The Detroit Police Department houses people 17 or older at the Detroit Detention Center in Detroit.

Per the Detroit Police Department's website, detainees are held for no longer than 72 hours before they are arraigned in the 36th District Court or 34th District Court, which are located at the following addresses:

36th District Court: 421 Madison Street, Detroit, MI 48226
Phone: 313-965-2200

34th District Court: 11129 Wayne Road, Romulus, MI, 48174
Phone: 734-941-4462

About three years ago, the 3rd Circuit Court took over all weekend and holiday arraignments.

For adult detainees who can't remember a phone number, DPD will allow the use of their cell phone to find a number when they arrive at the Detroit Detention Center. For minors, arresting officers will contact the parents or guardians and notify the desk supervisor of who they called and when.

Determining case status

When someone is arrested, a bystander can question why an arrest is being made, but police officers aren't required to respond, said Rubina Mustafa, senior staff attorney at the Detroit Justice Center. At that moment, she said, it's fine to ask the officers simple questions about why the arrest is being made or where the subject will be held, but don't push back too hard.

"To ask questions is fine. Demanding answers isn't going to really get you anywhere. And, potentially, this is where they use resisting or obstructing charges against people," Mustafa said.

The Detroit Police Department confirmed that civilians who interfere with an arrest could be arrested for resisting and obstructing, felonious assault against a police officer or assault and battery, depending on the circumstances.

To view charges filed against someone in custody, Mustafa suggested the Wayne County Sheriff's website. The information can also be obtained by contacting the criminal division of the district court (313-965-2200 for 36th District Court and 734-941-4462 for 34th District Court).

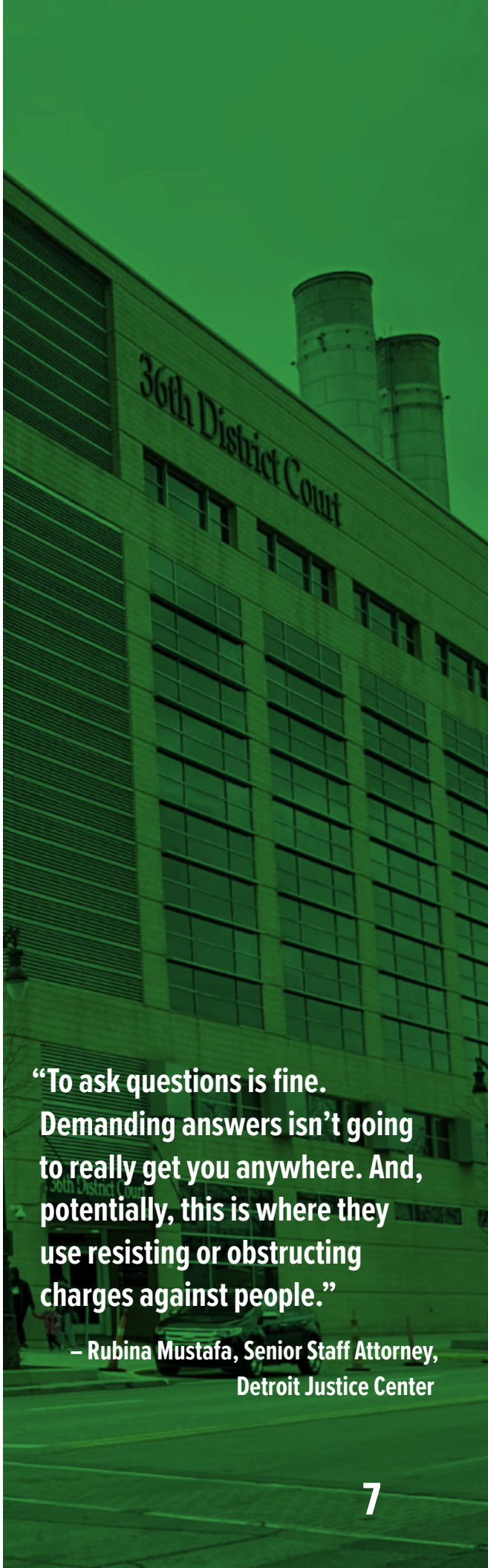
The arrestee will learn about the charges filed against them at an arraignment, which is generally held in district court, said Robin Dillard-Russaw, director of the Indigent Defense Services Department. At that point, they will be paired with an arraignment attorney, which is required during the proceeding, Dillard-Russaw said.

Adults detained for misdemeanors can request a court-appointed attorney to handle their case, Dillard-Russaw said. For felonies, adults head to circuit court and are paired with another attorney, in addition to the arraignment attorney, to manage their case, she explained.

The Neighborhood Defender Service is another resource to connect with an attorney representing a loved one if the nonprofit is handling the case, said Kristine Longstreet, managing director of the nonprofit. The Neighborhood Defender Service is a vendor contracted with Wayne County to handle 35% of felony cases, Dillard-Russaw said.

Here's how Detroiters can contact both entities:

- Neighborhood Defender Service: 1333 Brewery Park, Suite 350, Detroit, MI 48207 313-474-3200
- The IDSD declined to share its address with BridgeDetroit, because it "is not accessible to the general public." However, the public can call the following number for general inquiries: 313-202-7103.



**"To ask questions is fine.
Demanding answers isn't going
to really get you anywhere. And,
potentially, this is where they
use resisting or obstructing
charges against people."**

**– Rubina Mustafa, Senior Staff Attorney,
Detroit Justice Center**

Attorneys can speak generally about the status of a case, but can't share every detail due to attorney-client privilege, Dillard-Russaw said.

Posting bail

At the arraignment, defendants will find out whether they can be released on a personal bond, Mustafa said. Personal bond, formally known as releasing someone on their own recognizance, means detainees must pay money if they fail to show up to court as promised. There's no money required to be released, but a cash bond would be required later if they don't come to court. Depending on the circumstances, the court could also set a cash bond amount, which must be paid by someone else, such as a friend, relative or a bail bond agency, or the person could be transferred to a treatment, evaluation or medical facility, Mustafa explained.

What can become a headache for families, she said, is not only coming up with the funds to post bail but also determining where else their loved ones might have outstanding arrest warrants.

If, for example, someone is arrested in Detroit and has warrants in Dearborn and Warren, their loved ones can post a bond in the city of Detroit, but the police department will give the other departments several days to pick up the person for the other outstanding warrants, Mustafa said. Per state law, someone who's been arrested instead of being issued an appearance ticket must be charged by the prosecutor or released no later than 3 p.m. the following day when arraignments can take place.

"Unless the family wants to post bond in Detroit and then post the bond in Dearborn and post the bond in Warren ... they'd have to go to all three different jurisdictions to make sure they've posted the appropriate amount of bond for all of those cases, and then they can be released from custody," Mustafa said.

If a person is in custody in one jurisdiction, has warrants in other areas and someone else pays those bonds, the courts will set an arraignment or pre-trial hearing for the detainee, Mustafa says.

The amount of time it takes to transport an arrestee from the Detroit Detention Center to a suburban department where they have an outstanding warrant depends on the seriousness of the alleged offense and the individual's warrant status, according to the Detroit Police Department.


Mustafa also warned of another surprising hurdle to bailing someone out: cash. Some courts accept credit cards and take payments online, but others only take in-person cash payments for bail, she said. The Detroit Police Department confirmed that it only accepts cash payments for posting bonds.

Retrieving property

Longstreet said locating and retrieving an impounded vehicle following an arrest "is not necessarily an easy task." In addition to providing counsel for Wayne County court cases, the Neighborhood Defender Service provides defendants with social workers, investigators and administrators to help with mental health care, communications with landlords, retrieving items like birth certificates, identification cards, car seats and other possessions from their vehicles if they can't afford impound fees, Longstreet said. Towing charges can vary from \$125 to \$300, plus additional fees of \$15 to \$20 per day, depending on the weight of the vehicle, the Detroit Police Department noted.

Here are the addresses for the Detroit Police Department's tow lots:

- 11631 Mt. Elliot Court, Detroit, MI 48212
- 10750 Grand River Avenue, Detroit, MI 48204
- 9425 Grinnell, Detroit, MI 48213

After detainees are released from the Detroit Detention Center, the Detroit Police Department will return their personal property as long as it isn't evidence of a crime, the agency said in a statement. 



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Black men bond where they feel at home — in the barbershop



By Bryce Huffman, Orlando Bailey and Quinn Banks

A trip to the barbershop used to be an all-day thing. On a typical Saturday morning in 1999, my mom would rush me and my brothers out of the house to get to Artistic Profiles on Morang Ave. on Detroit’s east side. We had to hurry — the barber gave out numbers to determine spots in line. The earlier you arrived, the better because it meant you wouldn’t be stuck in the shop all day.

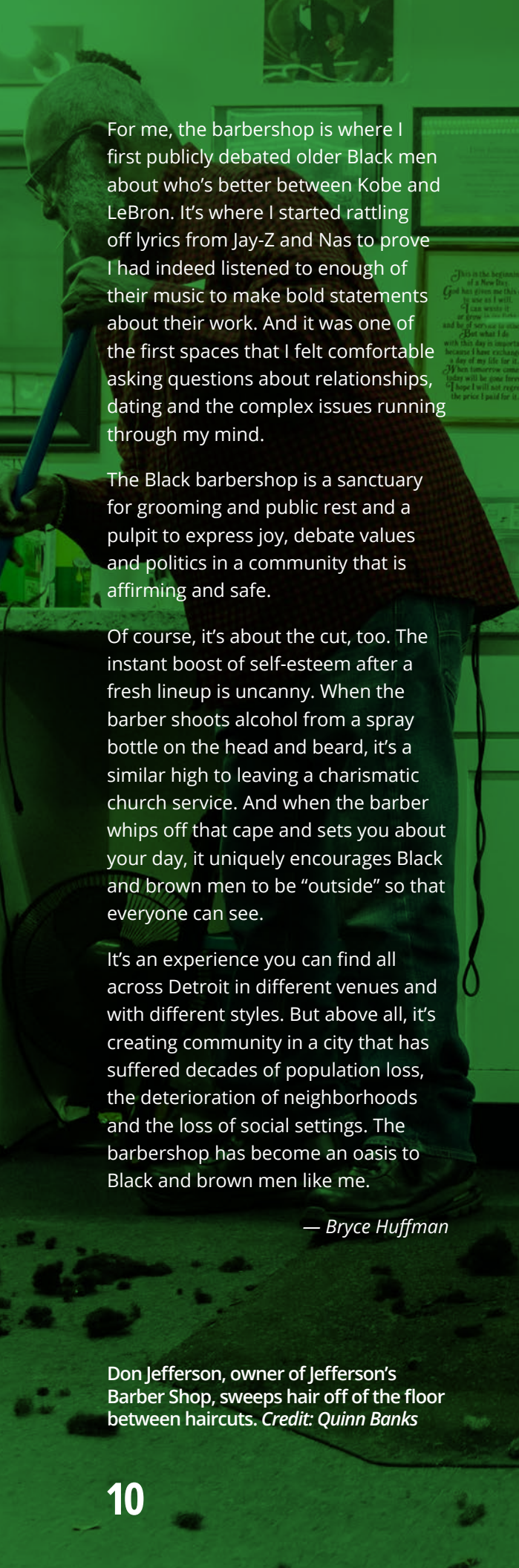
Artistic Profiles was a brightly colored marketplace buzzing with people, laughter, hot takes and posters with different haircut options by the number. Conversation, connection and commerce were the engines that powered the place where I spent so much time as a youngster styling my hair and learning about the world. Even though Artistic Profiles is no more, the culture that I experienced from “the chair” endures.

There aren’t many third spaces in society where Black men feel safe enough to rest in public. Defensive city planning practices and surveillance often make it uncomfortable for people of color to engage in public respite activities. But in the barbershop, everyone has value and a place.

— Orlando Bailey

“Just being young, being Black, once you get your haircut, you feel like you’re untouchable.”

**- Detroit
Johnnie Moore**

A man in a red sweater and glasses is sweeping hair off a barbershop floor. The floor is covered in clumps of dark hair. The background shows a barbershop with a mirror, a chair, and various items on a counter.

For me, the barbershop is where I first publicly debated older Black men about who's better between Kobe and LeBron. It's where I started rattling off lyrics from Jay-Z and Nas to prove I had indeed listened to enough of their music to make bold statements about their work. And it was one of the first spaces that I felt comfortable asking questions about relationships, dating and the complex issues running through my mind.

The Black barbershop is a sanctuary for grooming and public rest and a pulpit to express joy, debate values and politics in a community that is affirming and safe.

Of course, it's about the cut, too. The instant boost of self-esteem after a fresh lineup is uncanny. When the barber shoots alcohol from a spray bottle on the head and beard, it's a similar high to leaving a charismatic church service. And when the barber whips off that cape and sets you about your day, it uniquely encourages Black and brown men to be "outside" so that everyone can see.

It's an experience you can find all across Detroit in different venues and with different styles. But above all, it's creating community in a city that has suffered decades of population loss, the deterioration of neighborhoods and the loss of social settings. The barbershop has become an oasis to Black and brown men like me.

— Bryce Huffman

Don Jefferson, owner of Jefferson's Barber Shop, sweeps hair off of the floor between haircuts. Credit: Quinn Banks

'No nonsense'

Inside Heavyweight Cuts, it's instantly noticeable that there are more Black people in the shop than any other business along this small stretch of Kercheval at Van Dyke. The shop has an old school barbershop feeling to it: It has the barber chairs and mirrors along the right wall, a couch and folding chairs on the opposite side of the shop and wooden floors where clumps of hair sit for a few moments until a barber sweeps them up.

In between the clipping and conversations, people look up at a small TV playing movies or, on Saturdays, college sports.

"We are a central place for fellowship," said David Hardin Jr., who has owned the shop for 23 years. "Sometimes you might just need to vent, to have somebody to listen to you, somebody that would have a clear head and who's not judgmental."

Hardin, 50, said he has worked hard to make sure his little paradise is all about community.

"This is a laid back cool environment. Good conversation. No nonsense," Hardin said.

Heavyweight Cuts is an average-sized barbershop with a familiar, family-friendly atmosphere – even if you've never been inside. Keeping that focus means, for Hardin and his customers, certain things need to stay outside.

"There is no smoking, no drinking, no gambling, I will keep the cussing to a minimum," he said. "So you could bring your mom, your grandma or granddad, your grandkids, your nieces and nephew, whoever. Even if they're not getting a cut, they won't feel uncomfortable being in here."

That's one of the main reasons 34-year-old Detroit Johnnie Moore has been getting his cuts at Hardin's shop since he was



14. Moore praised Hardin's efforts to keep the shop "feeling like family" over the years.

"Dave always treats me right and since this is a neighborhood shop, I see him treat the customers right," Moore said. "He always treats his people right so they always come back for more."

In the past 20 years, Moore said he's seen the surrounding neighborhood change, but Hardin's Heavyweight Cuts has been a constant. It's one of the reasons Moore said he feels comfortable bringing his 4-year-old daughter to the shop with him.

Beyond the consistency though, Moore just loves the way Hardin makes him look after a fresh cut.

"Just being young, being Black, once you get your haircut, you feel like you're untouchable," he said. "So there's no better feeling in the world, especially when the girls like it."

Whether someone is going to get a fresh haircut in time for wedding photos, to debate with their friends about why the Detroit Lions might actually be successful next season, or to simply rest in a public space, the neighborhood barbershop can provide relief from some of the harsh realities of living in the city like gun violence, poor economic conditions and the narrative erasure that leave so many feeling invisible.

And, it's not just important for Detroiters. The U.S. has a history of being unsafe for its Black citizens since its inception



through chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws, subsequent police brutality and other forms of systematic disenfranchisement and marginalization. According to a survey conducted by The Harris Poll two years after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, about one-third of Black Americans felt less safe than they did prior.

Yet, across the city, Hardin and other barbers work hard to keep people's spirits high.

A place to 'hang out'

Jefferson's Barber Shop on Ryan Road is not too different in appearance from Heavyweight Cuts, but the atmosphere is much more tailored to grown men being unapologetically themselves.

There's profanity, the sight and smell of cognac in small Solo cups and, often, some bad advice about dealing with relationships. But for owner Don Jefferson, that's always been the vibe.

"Man, these guys come in here to hang out," Jefferson said in the middle of cutting a customer's hair. "Half the time, they don't even get a cut. They just watch TV or drink and talk about whatever."

Jefferson, 77, said his journey to becoming the neighborhood barber was unplanned.

"Back in the day when I was raising my children and kept getting laid off from Chrysler, I had to do something, so I decided to do this," he said.

Soon after being laid off, the former plant worker turned his "side hustle" into a 32-year career. He bought what used to be a flower shop and has been running it as a barbershop ever since. He's seen many changes in the city and his neighborhood throughout the years, but among the biggest is in the way men wear their hair.

"The older men used to, and a lot of them who still have hair, wear it shorter and more neat," he said. "But the younger generation, they like to wear it long like folks did back in the day when they couldn't afford to get it cut."

While Jefferson prefers the short and neat look, he's happy to give his customers whatever they want.

"Even when their hair is a mess, kinda like what you've got," he said while pointing to my head.

Jefferson said he's proud that Black men of many different generations can come to his place and feel comfortable.

The generational hair preferences are evident in Jefferson's. The old cats like to rock tapered bald fades with Murray's wave grease and an olive oil spray sheen to finish it off. The younger crowd trends more toward tapered locs and curly fros with some help from the spin brush with faded sides and a line up.

Even the facial hair is different between the generations. The older men in the shop wear their beards and mustaches very neat, while the younger men who can grow facial hair let theirs curl up and roam freely like an afro on their face.

People 'who are like me'

In Southwest Detroit, shops cater more to Latino Detroiters who also need a barbershop of their own to call home.

Misters Barbershop, owned by Guatemalan immigrant Diego Vasquez, fits

that bill. Vasquez, who doesn't speak English, takes pride in having a place for other Spanish-speaking residents to feel comfortable.

"I work with a lot of people who are like me, which is a lot of fun," Vasquez, 40, told me via his daughter, Esmeralda, 20, who translated.

Misters shares similarities with the shops on the east side: Many grown men with their sons, laughter and familial vibes, confidence oozing from each man as they get up from the chair following a haircut.

At Mister's, Latin culture is on full display from the front door to the bathroom in the back, including Latin pop music videos on the TV and canvas paintings hung up on the orange and blue walls. Some of the stations alongside the barber chairs, where clients were draped in Gucci G capes, had pictures of family members taped to the mirrors and countertops lined with products and clippers.

Vasquez has only been living in the United States full-time for "about two years" and has owned the shop for one year, but he hopes to stay cutting hair on Vernor for a long time.

"I like it because [cutting hair] has been my job for many years and I like transforming people's look by changing up their hair, especially for Latinos," Vasquez said.

The shop and its owner are primarily there to serve Spanish speakers, but Vasquez said "everyone is welcome."



A spa feeling

It's not just men who are finding a home in the barbershop.

Dawn Sanford has been cutting hair for over 35 years. About four and a half years ago, the owner of Shears and Shaves Salon and Spa started her own shop on Livernois near Eight Mile.

The entire goal, she said, was to bring an upscale salon feeling to the city's northwest side. The floors, leather chairs and even the clippers look new in a way that isn't typical for a Detroit barbershop. The walls are lined with large images of famous Detroiters including Mayor Coleman Young and former Detroit Pistons "Bad Boy" star Isiah Thomas.

The front of the salon has a waiting area with a chess set sitting between comfy seats and haircare products neatly lined up in a display case for customers to buy.

"I wanted to bring an atmosphere of relaxation, a spa feeling, to the city," Sanford said. "We want you to have that total experience with a peace-of-mind, taking-the-edge-off safe space feeling, if you will."

Sanford, 66, spent more than 30 years working at Big D's, a unisex barbershop about a mile and a half south. She took a lot from her time there and brought a lot of things – family-friendly vibes, expertise in various styles and even quite a few loyal customers – to her own shop.

"She's an excellent barber to me, so I'll follow her wherever she goes," customer Keith Reese told me while waiting for a haircut in the lobby.

Reese considers Sanford to be "like a big sister." She not only makes sure he looks and feels nice, she also listens carefully to him, he said.



"I can talk to her, she can tell when I need certain things done, she can tell when I might need a head massage, just by the expression I might have on my face," Reese said.

Aside from a haircut, Shears and Shaves offers services not often associated with barbershops in Detroit: aromatherapy, massages, manicures, pedicures, facials, body scrubs and more. The extra services are a great touch, Sanford said, but she believes people come back because she learned how to make it feel professional.

"We're more than just a service, we're a culture," she said. "So we create culture, we create the understanding of how service works. If you be there for your customers, your customers will be there for you." 🇺🇸

BridgeDetroit

2024 Voter Guide:

Everything you need to know about participating in elections



Michigan's primary is Aug. 6 and its general election is Nov. 5, but there are numerous steps and deadlines in the process of voters electing state and federal officials.

Michigan voters will select a new U.S. senator, 13 members of the U.S. House, 110 members of the state House and decide its 15 Electoral College votes for president, among other things.

The polls will be open in Detroit and the surrounding suburbs from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

The process is different this year because of new laws mandating early voting and wider access to absentee ballots.

Here are key dates to know:

July 15 to 18: The Republican National Convention meets in Milwaukee to nominate a presidential candidate and adopt a platform.

July 22: Deadline to register by mail or online to be eligible to vote in the August election. You can register in-person through Election Day at your local clerk's office.

July 27: Nine days of early voting before the primary begins

Aug. 4: Last day of early voting.

Aug. 6: Primary election. Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Voters in line at 8 p.m. can still cast ballots.

Aug. 19 to 22: The Democratic National Convention meets in Chicago to nominate a presidential candidate and adopt a platform.

Oct. 24: Nine days of early voting must begin for general election

Nov. 3: Last day of early voting

Nov. 5: General election. Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Voters in line at 8 p.m. can still cast ballots.



Who oversees elections?

In Wayne County, that would be **Wayne County Clerk Cathy Garrett**

The clerk's office is located at 2 Woodward Ave., City-County Bldg Rm 502, Detroit, Michigan 48226-3463

Phone: (313) 224-5525

Fax: (313) 224-6424

Email: jredmond@waynecounty.com

In Detroit, City Clerk Janice Winfrey oversees elections.

The clerk's office is located at 2978 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, Michigan 48235. It is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday -Friday.

Phone: (313) 876-0190

Fax: (313) 224-1466

Email: winfreyj@detroitmi.gov

Am I registered to vote?

Scan here to check your voter registration status or call your local clerk.



Before Election Day, check to make sure your voter registration is accurate. You can correct your address on your voter registration online or by mail up to two weeks before an election or visit your clerk's office to provide official proof of residency up to and on Election Day.

How can I register to vote?

Michigan voters are encouraged to register as early as possible before an election. Methods and requirements for voter registration depend on the following deadlines:

If there are 15+ days before an election, voters can register online, by mail, or in person.

Within 14 days of an election, and on Election Day, voters may only register by visiting their local clerk's office to register in person with proof of residency documentation.

Voters can check their voter registration status and look up their local clerk information at Michigan.gov/Vote.

Register using a printable registration form: You may register to vote using a translated, printable voter registration form. You can register using a printed registration form if:

- You have either a valid state of Michigan ID or Driver's License or the last 4 digits of your social security number (only one is required).
- You are at least 17.5 years of age
- You are not within 14-days of an Election Day



Scan here for a printable voter registration form

Register at a self-service station: Self-Service Stations offer voter registration transactions in non-English languages. View the Self-Service Station section of this web-page for more information.

Register in person at your clerk's office: You can visit your local clerk's office to register to vote in-person. Within 14-days of an Election, you must register in-person at your local clerk's office and must present proof of residency. Proof of residency is an official document listing your full name and current address, and may include a bank statement, a valid MI driver's license or ID, a lease, or a utility bill.

Source: Michigan Secretary of State

Combatting misinformation

Unfortunately, there are bad actors out there who like to take advantage of election time to spread disinformation (information that is untrue) and misinformation (information that is untrue and deliberately harmful).

This can apply to the candidates themselves, campaigners at and off polling sites, ads, robocalls and more.

New this year, Michigan officials are aiming to deter “deep fakes” in political campaigning as artificial intelligence becomes more convincing.

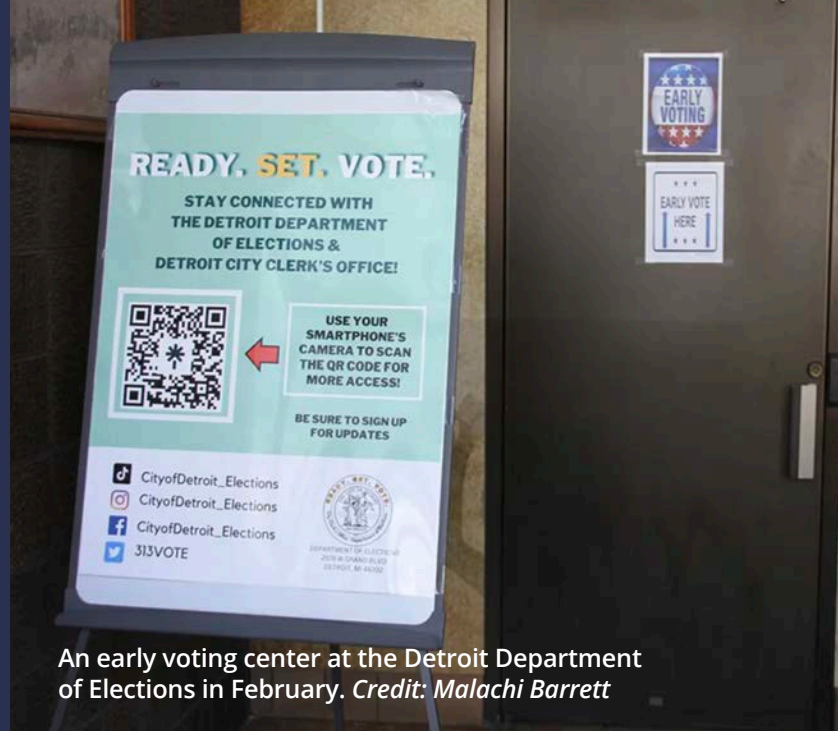
New laws require disclaimers on any campaign ads or political content that were digitally altered using A.I. Failure to do so could lead to stiff criminal penalties. Supporters of the changes feared if left unchecked, such content could be used to spread false information in a way that influences election results.

If you get a robocall, receive literature at your house or hear a political ad and you are unsure if it is accurate information about candidates or issues, there are several reputable sources you can turn to.

Obviously BridgeDetroit (bridgedetroit.com), our sister publication Bridge Michigan (bridgemi.com/michigan-government/2024-michigan-voter-guide) and the local chapter of Votebeat (votebeat.org/michigan) strive to provide nonpartisan information. You can also visit Ballotpedia (ballotpedia.org/Michigan) for candidate information and voting records. The League of Women Voters of Michigan (lwvmi.org) is also a reputable source for nonpartisan election information.

The general rule to take: If something sounds too good to be true or uses “absolute” language like “never,” “always,” etc, it’s worth fact-checking. Issues are rarely so black and white.

If you encounter what you believe to be information, you can **report it to the state by emailing misinformation@michigan.gov**



An early voting center at the Detroit Department of Elections in February. *Credit: Malachi Barrett*

Before Election Day

Voters can vote early now in Michigan, with early voting centers opening nine days before Election Day. They can also vote no-reason absentee and drop off ballots at ballot box locations across the city. Or they can vote on Election Day at their polling place in their precinct.

How does early voting work?

Local clerks are now required to provide **at least nine days of early voting for eight hours a day ahead of statewide elections**, starting the second Saturday before an election until the Sunday before the election.

Although voters in recent cycles could request, fill out and file an absentee ballot in person, early voters this year will experience the voting booths, poll workers and “I Voted” stickers synonymous with Election Day. They’ll also get to personally feed their ballot into a tabulator that will count it.

Clerks can allow longer periods of early voting if they choose, as the proposal and subsequent implementation laws allow for up to 29 days of early voting for statewide elections.

In Detroit, **you can vote in person at the Detroit City Clerk’s office or at an Early Voting Site.**

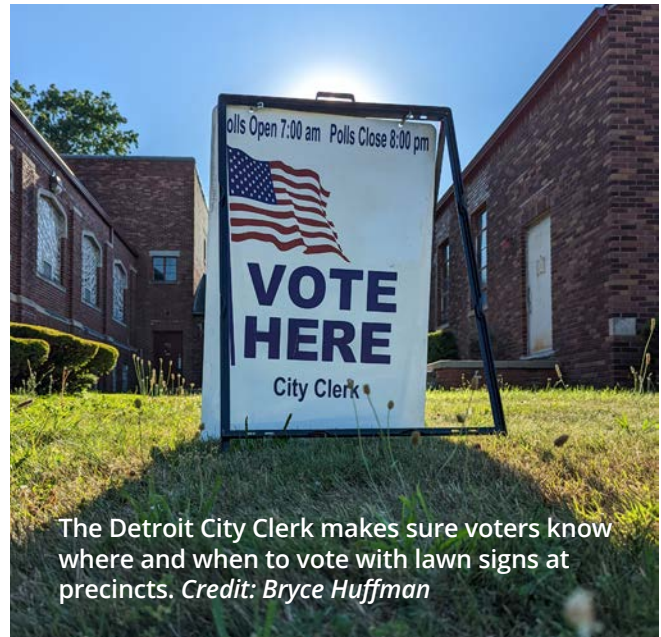
When you vote at an Early Voting Site, your voting experience will be similar to that of voting at a polling place on Election Day. You will complete your ballot, place it in a secrecy sleeve, and then deposit it into the voting tabulator.

All Early Voting Sites below will be open July 27 - August 4 and October 24 - November 3.

Locations:

- Department of Elections, 2978 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, Michigan 48202.
- Clark Park, 1130 Clark, Detroit, Michigan 48209.
- City Clerk Office, 2 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Ste 106, Michigan 48226.
- Christ Temple Baptist Church, 10628 Plymouth Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48204.
- Butzel Family Center, 7737 Kercheval, Detroit, Michigan 48214.
- Adams Butzel Recreation Complex, 10500 Lyndon, Detroit, Michigan 48238.
- Palmer Park Community Center, 1121 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit, Michigan 48203.
- WCCCD Eastern Campus, 5901 Conner, Detroit, Michigan 48213.
- Northwest Activities Center, 18100 Meyers Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48235.
- Fanwell Recreation Center, 2711 E Outer Dr., Detroit, Michigan 48234.
- WCCCD Northwest, 8200 W. Outer Dr., Detroit, Michigan 48219.
- Kemeny Recreation Center, 2260 S. Fort St., Detroit, Michigan 48217.
- Heilmann Recreation Center, 19601 Crusade, Detroit, Michigan 48205.
- Greater Grace Temple, 23500 W. Seven Mile Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48219.

Source: *City of Detroit*



The Detroit City Clerk makes sure voters know where and when to vote with lawn signs at precincts. *Credit: Bryce Huffman*

How does absentee voting work?

Apply for an absentee ballot:

Every registered voter in Michigan can vote using an absent voter (AV) ballot. To request an AV ballot, you must complete and submit an Absent Voter Ballot Application.

Options for completing an Absent Voter Ballot Application:

- Complete and submit an application online using a browser featuring an auto-translate feature.
- Call your city or township clerk and ask that a printed application be mailed to you.
- Download a printable, translated application to return by mail or in person to your local clerk or township.
- In-person at your designated local clerk's office.

Completed applications must be received by your designated clerk via mail, email or dropped off in-person by the Friday before Election Day.



Scan here to apply for an absentee ballot



Completing and returning your absentee voter ballot:

After submitting a completed application, a ballot will be mailed to your address. Your absent voter ballot may also be issued in-person while visiting your designated local clerk's office within 45 days of election day. Returned your completed absentee ballot to your designated absentee ballot dropbox or by hand to your city, township, or village clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Options for returning a completed absent voter ballot:

- Hand-deliver your completed ballot to your designated local clerk in-person.
- Mail your completed ballot to your designated local clerk (not recommended within 2-weeks of Election Day).
- Use your designated clerk's drop-box location.

Drop-box information and locations:

Every Michigan municipality is now required to have at least one secure ballot drop box for absentee voters in future elections, with an additional drop box for every 15,000 registered voters.

Separate legislation increases the maximum size of an election precinct from 2,999 active registered voters to 5,000.

You can drop off your absentee ballot at these drop box locations throughout the city. All are available 24/7.

- Wcccd Downtown: 1001 W. Fort St. (at Lafayette), Detroit, Michigan 48226.
- Liberty Temple Baptist Church - Ballot Box Only, 17188 Greenfield Rd. (near 6 Mile/McNichols), Detroit, Michigan 48235.
- North Rosedale Park Community House, 18445 Scarsdale St. (near Puritan), Detroit, Michigan 48223.
- Pistons Performance Center, 690 Amsterdam St. (at Second Ave.), Detroit, Michigan 48202.
- Wcccd Northwest Campus, 8200 W. Outer Dr., Detroit, Michigan 48219.
- Greater Grace Temple, 23500 W. 7 Mile Rd, Detroit, Michigan 48219.
- Northwest Activity Center, 18100 Meyers Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48235.
- Tindal Activity Center, 10301 W. 7 Mile Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48221.
- Farwell Recreation Center, 2711 E. Outer Dr., Detroit, Michigan 48234.
- Heilmann Community Center, 19601 Crusade, Detroit, Michigan 48205.
- Renaissance Baptist Church - Ballot Box Only, 1045 E. Grand Blvd. (near E. Forest), Detroit, Michigan 48207.
- Rouge Park Golf Course - Ballot Box Only, 11701 Burt Rd. (outer Dr. & Plymouth), Detroit, Michigan 48228.
- Wcccd Eastern Campus, 5901 Conner, Detroit, Michigan 48213.
- Butzel Family Recreation Center, 7737 Kercheval, Detroit, Michigan 48214.
- Department Of Elections, 2978 W. Grand Blvd, Detroit, Michigan 48202.
- City Clerk's Office - Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Ave., Suite 106, Detroit, Michigan 48226.
- Clark Park, 1130 Clark St., Detroit, Michigan 48209.
- Kemeny Recreation Center, 22605 Fort St., Detroit, Michigan 48217.
- Adams Butzel Recreation Complex, 10500 Lyndon St., Detroit, Michigan 48238.
- Crowell Community Center, 16630 Lahser Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48219.
- Palmer Park Community Center, 1121 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit, Michigan 48203.
- Greater Emmanuel Institutional Cogic, 19190 Schaefer Hwy., Detroit, Michigan 48235.
- Perfecting Church, 7616 E. Nevada St., Detroit, Michigan 48234.
- Faith Temple, 19000 Conant, Detroit, Michigan 48234.
- Greater St. Paul, 15325 Gratiot, Detroit, Michigan 48205.
- Balduck Park, 5271 Canyon St., Detroit, Michigan 48236.
- DWSD Eastside Customer Care Center, 13303 E. McNichols Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48205.
- Considine Center, 8904 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48202.
- Greater Christ Baptist Church, 3544 Iroquois Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48214.
- Horatio Williams Foundation, 1010 Antietam Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48207.
- Unity Baptist Church, 7500 Tireman Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48204.
- Christ Temple Baptist Church, 10628 Plymouth Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48204.
- Davison Service Yard, 8221 Davison W., Detroit, Michigan 48238.
- William Ford Memorial Church, 16400 W. Warren Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48228.
- Edison Library, 18400 Joy Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48228.

Source: City of Detroit



**For more BridgeDetroit news
visit [BridgeDetroit.com](https://www.BridgeDetroit.com)**



On Election Day

Voters can come in person to cast their ballots on Election Day, but they also have the option to do so in advance under the state's new early voting law.

How does in-person voting work?

Procedurally, early voting and Election Day voting are treated the same: a voter fills out a ballot and feeds it directly into their polling place's tabulator. With the press of a button, the voter casts their ballot for counting, though they have the option before that to scrap it and request a new one if the tabulator identifies a mistake, like voting for multiple candidates for one office.

Tabulators keep a running total of ballots cast, and the ballots themselves drop down into a bag inside the machine. Ballots with votes for write-in candidates are checked manually by election workers.

The votes are stored on two memory cards in the machine, which are sealed with a tamper-evident lock that can be broken only once the polls close on Election Day. Once the polls close, the chair and co-chair of the precinct (two election workers of different political parties), enter a code into the machine given to them by the city clerk that prints off three paper reports with the results.

At that point, election officials are tasked with securely transporting the memory cards, the election reports and sealed bags of ballots to their local clerk's office. The results on the memory cards are then uploaded into the clerk's computer system and sent to the county clerk's office.

One of the paper copies of the results stays with the city clerk, one is sent to the Board of County Canvassers, and one is sent to the county's chief probate judge.

After Election Day

Ever wonder what happens after you cast your ballot? Or how they keep track of and make sure all absentee and early voting ballots get counted. Here's how:

What happens after Election Day is over?

Both absentee and in-person ballots are sealed into official ballot bags and stored in clerks' offices, where they must remain until the Board of State Canvassers certifies the election results.


Unofficial results are first reviewed by county canvassing boards — four-person panels made up of two Democrats and two Republicans nominated by their respective parties — to ensure the number of voters matches the number of ballots cast. If there are discrepancies, canvassers can require the ballots to be brought before the board in a public meeting to address any issues.

Once county canvassers sign off, the Board of State Canvassers reviews results from all 83 counties and votes to officially certify the results statewide. For the general election, canvassers are required to meet no later than Nov. 25.

If a statewide political race is decided by 2,000 votes or less, an automatic recount is triggered. A candidate can also request a recount within 48 hours after results are certified, though the process is expensive and rarely reverse the original result.

If a recount is triggered, canvassers in contested jurisdictions have 20 days for primary elections or 30 days for general elections to finish the job.

After election results are certified and any recounts are complete, local clerks move the ballots into storage, where they must be kept for 22 months.

The elections process is also audited at state and local levels following a major election cycle to determine whether procedures were properly followed, with the Bureau of Elections randomly selecting precincts in specific contests for post-election review. 



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**Democracy: Elections
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Tuesday, August 20, 2024
**Housing and
Home Repair**

Tuesday, July 16, 2024
I-375 & Reparations

Tuesday, September 24, 2024
Resources for Refugees

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